



FWP Region 4
4600 Giant Springs Road
Great Falls, MT 59405

August 4, 2020

Dear Interested Citizen,

Thank you for your thoughtful review of and comments on Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' (FWP) proposal to restore bighorn sheep to the Little Belt Mountain complex in central Montana. This proposed action would actively restore self-sustaining populations of wild sheep in the Little Belts through translocation and habitat improvement projects.

Enclosed is a decision notice in which FWP reviews public comments and explains its rationale for choosing the proposed action (Alternative B) as described and explained in the Final Environmental Assessment (EA), as amended from Draft EA, based on public input. The decision document includes all comments received during the public review and comment period for the Draft EA for this project.

Please feel free to contact me at (406) 454-5840 with any questions you may have. Thank you for your interest and participation.

Sincerely,

Gary Bertellotti
Regional Supervisor



DECISION NOTICE for the

Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep to the Little Belt Mountains

*Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; Region 4
4600 Giant Springs Road, Great Falls MT 59405
(406) 454-5840
August 4, 2020*

INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSED ACTION

This proposal is to restore a self-sustaining and genetically diverse population of bighorn sheep to the Little Belt Mountains of central Montana, an island range located 30 miles southeast of Great Falls.

Under this proposal, projects would be implemented to translocate bighorn sheep into suitable habitats within the Little Belt Mountain complex. An initial proposed translocation of 50 bighorn sheep is described in the Final Environmental Assessment.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative A: *No Action*

Alternative B: *Approve reintroduction of bighorn sheep to the Little Belt Mountains and proceed with an initial release of HD 482 sheep in the vicinity of the South Fork Judith River (preferred Alternative).*

Alternative C: *Approve reintroduction of bighorn sheep to the Little Belt Mountains but advise FWP to identify an alternative initial source of sheep or a release site other than the South Fork Judith River area.*

PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

FWP is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess potential impacts of its proposed actions to the human and physical environments, evaluate those impacts through an interdisciplinary approach, including public input, and make a decision based on this information. FWP released a cover letter (summarizing proposal details) and draft environmental assessment (EA; "For the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana") for public review of this proposal on July 3, 2020 and accepted public comment for 30 days through August 3, 2020.

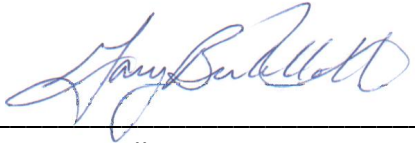
FWP extensively noticed this proposal by publishing it on the FWP website, through news releases, and by directly contacting landowners, land managers, livestock production organizations, sporting groups, and wildlife conservation groups. FWP received 183 comments from individuals or groups supporting the project. One commenter asked the Dept. to restore mountain goats instead of bighorn sheep, one commenter asked the Dept. to remove more predators, and one discouraged the Dept. from proceeding because he believed the reintroduced bighorn would be illegally killed. The Montana Woolgrowers Association supported the proposal and offered substantial and substantive input that was incorporated into the Final Environmental Assessment. All public comment received during the comment period is appended to this Decision Notice.

DECISION

Based upon the Final Environmental Assessment and the applicable laws, regulations, and policies, I have determined that the proposed action will not have significant negative effects on the human and physical environments associated with this project. Therefore, I conclude that the EA is the appropriate level of analysis, and preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is unnecessary.

No concerns were raised during the public comment period that would bring the environmental analysis into question. However, the Draft Environmental Assessment was amended to address substantive and emphatic concerns brought forward by the Montana Woolgrowers Assn. and other commenters. Specifically, the Final Environmental Assessment more clearly states that bighorn sheep are biologically secure in MT, commingling of wild and domestic sheep in the Little Belt complex is possible and would be no fault of domestic sheep producers, bighorn sheep respiratory disease can be triggered by environmental factors and can occur without contact between wild and domestic sheep, and that domestic sheep producers are neither liable for nor at fault if a wild sheep is removed when observed commingling with domestic sheep.

Based on the analysis in the Final EA I have selected the "Proposed Action" (Alternative B). The finding of selection for the "Proposed Action" Alternative B for the Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep to the Little Belt Mountains is the product of this Decision Notice.



Gary Bertellotti
Region 4 Supervisor
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

8/4/2020

Public Comment Received on the Draft Environmental Assessment

Body	From: (Name)
<p>As a lifelong resident of Montana and Avid sportsman I love the idea of transplanting sheep in hopes of establishing another hunt able herd in Montana. I am a little concerned with the know Mountain Lion population in the area spoken of. I am all in favor of the transplant but would like to see it done in stages of some now and some later to be sure the population will survive without taking a large number from a fantastic herd now only to be reduced by depredation.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>406archer@gmail.com</p>
<p>I am in favor of the proposed reintroduction of bighorn sheep in the Little Belt Mountains. I have several questions/comments regarding the draft EA:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Given that bighorn sheep sometimes demonstrate a requirement for salt, particularly ewes during lamb rearing, are there any natural salt sources (licks) in the release area, or are there plans to provide a salt source? Sheep seeking salt at lower elevations and/or on private lands might have a greater potential to contact domestic livestock. 2. Will all translocated sheep be released at a single site, or will releases be at several (comparatively adjacent) sites to encourage movement between groups/habitats/range expansion? Given that some translocated sheep herds have shown comparatively little development of migratory patterns over time, are there any techniques to encourage migratory behavior? 3. Although the known locations of domestic sheep herds are well away from the proposed release site, are there any "hobby" farm sheep or goats closer to the area? Have these people been contacted? 4. Were domestic sheep ever present at or near the proposed release site? Given the potential for some disease pathogens to remain viable in the soils for many years, is this a concern? 	<p>pfarmer@westech-env.com</p>

5. Sheep from HD 482 have been translocated to several areas in the past (Table 2 in the EA). Have any of these releases been at similar elevations/habitats as the proposal? If so, how have these translocations fared, particularly with regard to disease outbreaks? Given that most HD 482 sheep appear to be located at lower, less mountainous habitats, are there concerns with translocating sheep to the proposed habitats?

6. It seems possible that translocated sheep might be stressed by the translocation process. Given the disease pathogen load already present in HD 482 sheep, will translocated sheep be given supplements or inoculations?

7. Are noxious weeds a concern in the proposed release area?

8. The EA suggests (pages 16, 23) that the USFS is/may conduct operations e.g., prescribed burning or timber harvest to improve sheep habitat in or near the area. Have any such operations occurred to date in or near the release site? Are such activities scheduled in the near future? Has there been a wildfire analysis (i.e., what is the potential for wildfire in the area)? While burning may ultimately improve bighorn sheep habitat, burning before the herd has established itself could potentially be deleterious.

9. The EA suggests a maximum population of 600 sheep (page 5; a maximum of 630 sheep in Appendix A) but the acreages presented in Appendix A are somewhat confusing. Does 600+ sheep refer to strictly the translocation area, or to the entire Little Belt Mountains, or something in between?

10. Page 23: "Given the much smaller size of bighorn, the AUM comparison is 24-36 cattle AUMs per bighorn AUM." This statement is somewhat confusing, and seems to imply that one sheep AUM equals 24-36 cattle AUMs. This is obviously not the case, as explained further in the discussion. Perhaps this sentence could be expanded or revised to clarify.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the EA. It will be rewarding to have bighorn sheep back in the Little Belts!

<p>Patrick Farmer</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	
<p>I support the sheep transplant in the Little Belt mountains of central Montana.</p> <p>I will be the closest landowner to the transplant site and think it is really a good idea to get bighorns back in the Little Belts. I will do all I can to support this.</p> <p>Layton Perry</p>	<p>lateperry@hotmail.com</p>
<p>Hello, I will keep this short. I am a Great Falls native and have spent much my life hunting, camping, hiking, and fishing in the Little Belt Mountains. By this time next year, I plan to buy property in the White Sulphur Springs area and live there for the rest of my days. All the time I've spent covering most of the range of the Little Belts, not once have I seen a single bighorn sheep, and that's really a shame. Therefore, I am in full support of this great species returning to the 'Belts. Just simply seeing one while on a hike would be such a wonderful experience. I am looking forward to it. Thank you for your consideration, Darryl Barker Great Falls</p>	<p>Darryl Barker</p>

<p>I fully support reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains. Reintroducing a native species to its home range is proper wildlife management. It is a win for wildlife and for the residents of this state. All suitable Big Horn Sheep habitat should have reintroduction plans and programs. I was fortunate to harvest a Bighorn Ewe in the Spanish Peaks a few years ago. While I count this as one of my most treasured hunting experiences, I personally was saddened that FWP did not have a transplant site for these sheep so they used regulated hunting to reduce the population on the winter range. I want to see sheep everywhere possible in this state and the West. Please continue this vital work.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>msalava@gmail.com</p>
<p>I like the idea of reintroducing the bighorn sheep but my one concern is the impact of Climate change on their habitat and food supply say in the next ten years? Is anyone looking into not only what food sources are currently available but what will be available so they do not end up starving to death. Good luck with the plan.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>cnhobbit@gmail.com</p>

<p>The Little Belt Mountains are a place my family loves to archery elk hunt and hike. When considering Big Horn Sheep reintroduction do not band packgoats from the Little Belts. There is no scientific evidence for disease transmission between packgoats and BHS but that has not stopped millions of acers of NF lands from disenfranchising a small minority of packgoat users from recreating on our public lands in a false pretense of protecting BHS. Please feel free to contact me with any questions. Nancy Clough</p> <p>Member: North American Packgoat Association and Wild Sheep Foundation</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>idahonancy@roadrunner.com</p>
<p>I fully support reintroduction of bighorn sheep into the Little Belt Mountains. Bighorns are an iconic native species in the area. Healthy bighorn populations will provide a range of outdoor recreation from wildlife viewing to regulated hunting. I urge FWP to move forward with the reintroduction.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>glennelison@gmail.com</p>

<p>FWP Staff and Commission, I enthusiastically support the effort to reintroduce Bighorn Sheep to the Little Belts. As a lifelong Montana resident, hunter, and recreationist, I am very excited by the proposal. I hope that one day when I am very old, I might not only see this iconic critter while I head to White Sulphur for a beer or the Smith for a float, but that I might be lucky enough to draw a tag. Bringing back the big herds of species like Bighorns is great for the continuance of Montana's hunting heritage, it's great for the local ecology, and brings dollars into our rural economies. Keep up the good work, Travis Vincent, Helena</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>travispvincent@gmail.com</p>
<p>I fully support the reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belts, as well as into any historical Bighorn Habitat where there is a possibility that a population may be established.</p> <p>I hope to see this relocation completed successfully and look forward to others in the future, such as the Bridger Mountains.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment and I look forward to seeing the project proceed.</p> <p>-Riley Pearson</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>riley.pearson09@gmail.com</p>

<p>Jay, I have read the EA and I fully support reintroducing sheep into the Little Belts.</p> <p>I prefer the option to get the sheep from 482. I think it would be really cool if this goes through, as I have always felt Montana could do a better job of trying to get sheep populations started in new areas. I know that can be a real challenge with all the domestic sheep we have in the state. I live in Lewistown and would be more than happy to help if there's any opportunity for volunteer work. I am a regional rep for the Montana Bowhunters Association and it sounded like you might need help looking for lambs next spring. Feel free to get a hold of me if that is the case. I just read the article in the paper about reintroducing pine martens, and I think that would be really cool as well.</p> <p>Jess Wagner406-939-3458</p>	<p>Jess Wagner</p>
<p>I favor reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep to the Little Belts. This would increase wildlife diversity and the habitat is ideal. Hazards from domestic sheep leasing would need to be addressed.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>gwhirry@gmail.com</p>

<p>I think that this reintroduction plan should be put into action. I applaud Montana for this big step in Bighorn Sheep conservation. If there is any way that i can help put sheep on the mountains please reach out.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Wayne C. Harper</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>waynecharper1@gmail.com</p>
<p>Project sounds great! Thanks for the consideration.Charles Sent from Mail [go.microsoft.com] for Windows 10</p>	<p>charles ferguson</p>
<p>Excellent! Would love to see Bighorn Sheep roaming around the Little Belts.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>kimbilladeau@gmail.com</p>
<p>Comments from Stephen Mayernik at 406-736-5374:</p> <p>I am in favor. I have know for a long time that there are several areas for suitable bighorn sheep habitat. One of the areas I have hunted before is Big Baldy near Oti Creek near Hughesville.</p>	<p>lhajek@mt.gov</p>

<p>I fully support the reintroduction of bighorn sheep into the little belts. As an avid hunter, living in Lewistown, I believe it will offer an awesome opportunity to see these amazing animals back in part of their historic range. I would also like to see there be hunting tags available once they have established a self sustaining population. The addition of more bighorn sheep hunting tags is a good thing for hunters and conservation fundraising.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>nbeckman@mt.gov</p>
<p>Hwy, I think reintroducing a self-sustaining and genetically diverse population of bighorn sheep in the Little Belt mountain range is a good idea. Thanks</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>laurielohrer@hotmail.com</p>
<p>I wholeheartedly welcome the proposal to reintroduce Bighorn sheep back into the Little Belts. I hike in the L. Belts often and I've always thought that sheep (and goats) should be put back where they undoubtedly roamed for thousands of years. Anxious to hear what the future holds... Jim Hanson Lewistown</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>jhanson@midrivers.com</p>

<p>I support the proposal for FWP to reintroduce bighorn sheep into the Little Belts to establish a self-sustaining and genetically diverse population of bighorn sheep there.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>mhg4556@gmail.com</p>
<p>Excellent idea! Money well spent!!</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Jamie.ruprecht@gmail.com</p>
<p>Totally support the reintroduction of Bighorn in the Little Belts within the guidelines of the 2010 Montana Bighorn Sheep Conservation Strategy.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>engy@interbel.net</p>
<p>I think that reintroduction is a great idea. Any habitat, especially with a lot of public land, that has the necessary ingredients for reintroducing a species such as sheep should have that species reintroduced or have their numbers bolstered. The company KuIU recently reintroduced sheep to a reservation successfully. I would like to see that done in the Belts by our wildlife managers (if not, private companies are more than welcome to do so as well).</p> <hr/>	<p>kevinromer@reagan.com</p>

<p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	
<p>Any efforts to restore native populations of bighorn sheep is a step in the right direction. I'm all for the Little Belt project!</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>jcoleabernathy@gmail.com</p>
<p>Would love to see Bighorn sheep reintroduced to the Little Belts!</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>nmarko@egas.net</p>
<p>I think it would be great to reintroduce Bighorns to the Little Belt Mountains. I have seen a ram at Limestone Canyon a couple times so there is already at least one that has been around the area.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>docsherer@aol.com</p>

<p>Yes, I think it would be a great opportunity for the fwp to get a new herd started. As long as there's habitat for them to survive. It would be nice to have a few bands roaming around.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>silvertipshooter@msn.com</p>
<p>Go for it! Sounds like a good idea as they were there before.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>jw@blackfoot.net</p>
<p>I really like this plan and think it would potentially add great hunting opportunity for future generation</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>nicolashardman@gmail.com</p>
<p>If there are already sheep there, why not control the predators (wolves, bears, mountain lions) to encourage the growth of the herd naturally. The last time you guys introduced a non-native species, we ended up with the wolf fiasco. I am in favor of leaving it alone, and letting the wild herd do what it's going to do.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>k.hatlelid@hotmail.com</p>

<p>I strongly support this reintroduction and hope that it is successful.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>keith_fisk@hotmail.com</p>
<p>I support reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep to the Little Belt Mountains.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>rsewell@cox.net</p>
<p>Seems like lots of good quality bighorn habitat in the little belts. I?d love to see them in there.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Dan@5evans.com</p>
<p>This is long overdue. Reintroducing bighorns is not only the right thing to do, but with time it will create more hunting opportunities and boost the rural economies like Belt and White Sulphur Springs where hunters find lodging, food, and fill up their tanks. Sheep hunts are exciting and hunters often bring along their cousins, brothers and friends to share in the special experience. I strongly encourage you to proceed with the reintroduction. Thank you.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Farronke@gmail.com</p>

<p>This is my first time filling one of these out so I'm not exactly sure what to say but this is a great idea. Any place in the historic range that sheep can live we should be trying to reestablish the population.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>maciejtyler@gmail.com</p>
<p>I believe the reintroduction of bighorn sheep is a very important step in giving these native sheep a fighting chance. Please do the right thing!</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Sellsforever1987@gmail.com</p>
<p>It is our duty in the NA model of conservation to help native species return to their historic habitat when able. Since the Big Horn Sheep have returned here under natural conditions, it's our responsibility to help them diversify the genetic pool and grow into a healthy sustainable population.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>jordan.m.stasi@gmail.com</p>

<p>After reviewing the environmental report, I can confidently support the relocation of bighorn sheep to the Little belt Mtns. Reintroduction has historically been proven as an excellent method to bring back wildlife populations where good habitat is waiting. See wild Turkey success story. _____</p> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>fish.huntsaunders@gmail.com</p>
<p>I support the reintroduction of bighorn sheep into the Little Belt Mountains.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>jacoblquinn@icloud.com</p>
<p>I support the reintroduction of bighorn sheep in the Little Belt Mountains of Montana and the conservation thereof. The natural populations that have migrated there are at risk of genetic bottlenecking and should be supported in reintroduction to previously inhabited lands.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Jessieprivett@yahoo.com</p>
<p>Please do whatever is possible to support the bighorn sheep in the little belts and anywhere else that the can exist within their historic range.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>donhaven77@gmail.com</p>

<p>I think this is a good idea to return Sheep to their historical range and give them an opportunity to thrive in what should be a good habitat for them.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	jgswags16@gmail.com
<p>I support the reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep in the Little Belt Mountains. We should be protecting wild and animals and wild places.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	Knones50@gmail.com
<p>Make it happen! If the ecosystem can support it, return these animals to their native land.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	colelcarrabba@gmail.com

<p>I think that is a great plan. Go for it. I live in Harlowton and hunt the Little Belts, I would love to see sheep there. thank. Jerry Blaquiere, Harlowton, MT</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>jkblacky@itstriangle.com</p>
<p>As a landowner in the Little Belts I would love to see more Big Horn sheep there. Thank you for all you do!</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>cw1313d@yahoo.com</p>
<p>I am in favor of reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mtns. John Backs</p> <p>Flathead Indian Reservation</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>jrvventures@blackfoot.net</p>
<p>I would like to express my support for this reintroduction. I spend a lot of time in the Little Belts and would love to be able to see sheep back where they belong. Thank you for your efforts to get this done.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>hunterpaul08@hotmail.com</p>

<p>Hi my name is Tiegan Phipps. I am 11 years old. My dad told me about the Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep transplant into the Little Belt mountain range. We have a cabin by Neihart. I've loved the outdoors my whole life. I love hunting, fishing, camping, and hiking. Bighorn sheep are my favorite animal. Me and my family go to our cabin a lot and I think that the bighorn sheep would be an awesome bonus. Can you put them by Johannesburg Gulch. So then I can wake up to them</p> <p>Regards, Tiegan Phipps</p>	Kelsey Phipps
<p>I support the expansion and or creation of rocky mountain big horn sheep herd. The little belts and the described area for this project have my full support.</p> <p>Joshua Shook</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	shookstermt@gmail.com
<p>Hi Jay:I fully support MT FWP's proposal to reintroduce bighorn sheep into the Little Belts. Thanks for allowing me to comment.</p> <p>Randy Gazda</p> <p><</p>	

<p>I think it would be a great idea to reintroduce Bighorn Sheep to the Little Belts .</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>kjgummere@aol.com</p>
<p>Well done. We highly support the reintroduction of bighorn sheep in the Little Belt Mountains!</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>rharris@think1.com</p>
<p>I have reviewed the draft EA regarding the reintroduction of martens to the Little Belt Mountains. I think this is a fantastic idea to restore something that was once there and is no longer there because of human influence. There are no apparent negative issues caused by proceeding. Please approve this proposal and continue with similar projects in other appropriate areas. Thank you, Phil Matteson Cascade, MT</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Reintroduction of Marten to the Little Belt Mountains' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>pkjmatteson@msn.com</p>
<p>Alternative B.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>rhammond@itstriangle.com</p>

<p>I think that would be a great idea to Reintroduction Bighorn sheep to the Little belt Mountains.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Radman180@yahoo.com</p>
<p>Any scientific viable measure to expand Montana's bighorn footprint is a worthy project. Concerns are the number of domestic sheep in the area. Another area that should be considered is the Terry Badlands; however with the same concern of domestic sheep.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>d.ziegler257@gmail.com</p>
<p>I strongly support the reintroduction of bighorn sheep into the Little Belt Mountains. The Little Belt Range has all of the components to provide good year round habitat for a strong sheep herd. The Little Belts are historic sheep range and I would love to see a healthy bighorn sheep population returned to this area.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>tr_heater@hotmail.com</p>

<p>As a landowner in the 418 district I support this project. I am wondering if Fwp or anyone has looked at either the spread or potential control of leafy spurge or other weeds by bighorn sheep. The forest in the 418 district has a growing issue with leafy spurge. I plan on being at July 22 meeting. I also pledge if reintroduction successful I will allow public access to my private land adjacent to forest for future hunting of the bighorn sheep.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Hughes@mtintouch.net</p>
<p>Would support big horns here in the Big Belts as well. Keep up the good work!</p> <p>Professional Regards,</p> <p>Bill Waldron</p> <p>406 989 1633</p>	<p>Bill</p>

<p>Bighorn sheep face daunting challenges across the west, and currently occupy a fraction of their historic range. Given the quality of the habitat, and the presence of a naturally-dispersed (but extremely small) bighorn herd in the Little Belts, I believe it would be the best course of action to reintroduce / supplement the small herd in the Little Belts with additional sheep, as to improve genetic diversity and overall herd health, while attempting to preserve natural migration routes & patterns. The habitat is incredibly high-quality, holds low potential for conflict with domestic sheep, and is historically good sheep habitat. This could be one of the last best chances to develop a new herd in Montana.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>rkayser89@gmail.com</p>
<p>My wife and I strongly support reintroduction of bighorn sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, a historical bighorn sheep range. With the pneumonia problem in bighorn sheep herds, the more diverse the herds, the better for long term survival of the species, not to mention the eventual increase in numbers of bighorns in the Little Belts to allow them to be hunted. Thank you, Gary and Sandee Cotton.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>glcot99@gmail.com</p>
<p>This sheep transplant is a great idea. We need more bighorns out there as we have some of the best habitat in the west. Lets see this get done. I will drive over there and help volunteer.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>mstoick444@gmail.com</p>

<p>historically the sheep introduction and reintroduction that i have seen in the Helena area has failed do to disease and management. Its costly and has little success. please lets consider saving our mountain Goat population before they are gone for good!</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	bosselldan@gmail.com
<p>I am all in favor of re-introducing bighorn sheep to the Little Belt Mountains. It's a great idea. ?</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	tmital@hotmail.com
<p>Sounds great. Excellent idea</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	Holz625@gmail.com

<p>As ranchers on west side of Little Belts near Confederate Gulch, we strongly support relication of a big horn sheep herd. The goats seem to be thriving at Avalanche Gulch. Thanks for what you do for the critters.</p> <p>Professional Regards,</p> <p>Bill Waldron 406 989 1633</p>	<p>Bill</p>
<p>I support this proposal.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Caconsolvo@gmail.com</p>
<p>I would like to voice my opinion in support of this reintroduction. Unlike our Grizzly Bear and Buffalo populations, this animal adds an aesthetic improvement and potentially a recreational entity without creating fear or the possibility of loosing/damaging personal property or life/limb. I'm all for it.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>shane.p.schulze@gmail.com</p>
<p>Reintroduce Big Horns! Thanks Kelly Kimzey Wise River, MT</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>kellys.safaris@gmail.com</p>

<p>It would be great to see sheep in the Little Belts is they will be able to survive after reintroduction. Are there any known diseases in the Little Belts known to cause mortality?</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Kyle_reedy@msn.com</p>
<p>I'm a hunter from Montana and I have an interest in seeing the Bighorn population increase for the sake of conservation and increased hunting opportunities. The small group bighorns already in the district demonstrates the viability of a self sustaining herd given sufficient genetic diversity. I fully support this reintroduction and hope to see it happen.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>lukecolberg@gmail.com</p>
<p>I support the reintroduction of bighorn sheep in to the Little Belts. This is a wonderful opportunity to return the species to its native range.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Tytwalters@gmail.com</p>
<p>I want to support the reintroduction of sheep. It is very important to a lot of Montnanans. Don't succumb to the small but vocal agricultural groups that don't want sheep because it might impact domestic sheep grazing. This is mostly public lands and belongs to all. Grazing leases are not a right for local landowners. They have taken advantage of public grazing for many years. Sheep should be a priority for all and I</p>	<p>Dwight Guynn</p>

believe that it is certainly a priority for most Montanans not just hunters. Hang in there and keep up the good work.	
Thanks again for sending me this document! I read it last night and fully support the reintroduction of sheep in the little belts. There is good information in the report showing you have done a thorough job of looking all aspects. I think it is very important to keep strengthening the sheep population across the state and hopefully increase hunter opportunity. Hopefully some of the introduced herds will be strong enough some day to become a source herd also.	blake moore
<p>Please go forward with the reintroduction of bighorn sheep to the little belt mountains. I feel if we have the opportunity to do so now that we should repair damage done to native herds in the past and restore them anywhere we can. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page</p>	rigriffin91@gmail.com
<p>Love the idea.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	michaelcronin640@hotmail.com

<p>I think you should try it</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>ridgerjones@gmail.com</p>
<p>Good morning Jay, Pretty exciting to hear about sheep going into the Little Belts! What area are your proposing? Need any help??</p>	<p>Pat Van Eimeren</p>
<p>I 100% support reintroducing bighorn sheep into the little Belt Mountains.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>D Newlon</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>agentnew@yahoo.com</p>
<p>I think this is a great idea. You have my support for it and keep up the good work!</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>sheephunterak@yahoo.com</p>

<p>I would be in favor of more or expanding the Bighorn Sheep population in the Little Belts.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>2aTP1776@Protonmail.com</p>
<p>I think it would be a great idea to have sheep reintroduced to the Little Belts as long as the land can support the current animals too. I have spent a lot of time in the Belts and it sure looks like it should.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>ccalvert72@yahoo.com</p>
<p>Hi Jay: I fully support MT FWP's proposal to reintroduce bighorn sheep into the Little Belts. Thanks for allowing me to comment.</p> <p><https://urldefense.com/v3/__http://www.avg.com/email-signature?utm_medium=email&utm_source=link&utm_campaign=sig-email&utm_content=webmail__;!!GaaboA!_1kLvGKyr9Pwgz5fabpY2iwYzQ63IG58cZKevOYBUfZ7Fx6YxpMMBkFoKpA8qg\$> [avg.com] Virus-free. www.avg.com [avg.com]</p>	<p>Randy Gazda</p>

<p>I support Preferred Alternative B: Alternative B - Approve reintroduction of bighorn sheep to the Little Belt Mountains and proceed with an initial release of HD 482 sheep in the vicinity of the South Fork Judith River (Preferred Alternative) Alternative B represents the preferred Alternative for restoring a sustainable population of bighorn sheep to the Little Belt Mountains. Under this Alternative, the Fish and Wildlife Commission would generally approve an active bighorn sheep restoration program for the Little Belts, beginning with a specific project to transplant 50 sheep from HD 482 to the South Fork Judith or adjacent drainages as soon as December 2020 (as described in Section D)</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>kdbolender@yahoo.com</p>
<p>"Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is taking public comment on an environmental assessment concerning a proposal to reintroduce bighorn sheep to the Little Belt Mountains in central Montana."</p> <p>I am in agreement with this proposal, under One condition.</p> <p>That Bighorn Sheep located in the Little Belt Mountains are Exempt from being hunted for a period of 25 years. Only under such conditions can multiple generations truly restock to an ecologically balanced number. Penalty for Poaching or Taking of a Bighorn Sheep within the designated boundaries must be 5 years in prison and a fine equal to the restocking of Six Bighorn Sheep to replace the one lost.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>rtyll@hotmail.com</p>

<p>I strongly favor reintroduction of bighorn sheep into the Little Belt Mountains. I also think Bighorn sheep should be introduced into the nearby Big Snowy Mountains.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>benjamin.w.simpson@gmail.com</p>
<p>Yes please. We need more places where sheep can live in Montana to increase the population.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>natemesser66@yahoo.com</p>
<p>Lets get it going, this would be awesome to establish a huntable population of bighorn sheep in the Little Belt Mountains.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>chris_wagner_7@hotmail.com</p>
<p>I believe this is an excellent idea, bighorn sheep would add to Montana's wildlife expansion in this area.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Loghome1953@gmail.com</p>

<p>Think this is a great idea</p> <p>Let's reintroduce them to all there historical ranges</p> <p>_____</p> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Baccash@att.net</p>
<p>I was pretty much raised hunting fishing camping and recreating the little belts and I think it would be a great idea to reintroduce the bighorn sheep to the little belts they have plenty of places to hide and plenty of food _____</p> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>HYPERELK2019@GMAIL.COM</p>
<p>I think its a great idea to get them started again in the belts.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>james@greenupls.com</p>
<p>I think bighorns would thrive in the Little Belts. I saw a couple in there a few years ago, just passing through I suppose but it was awesome to see them there. They might wander when they first get there but if you can get a few to stay in there and have a couple years with good lamb numbers I think they would stick around and do real good! Plenty of good habitat up there too. Lots of big cats but I think they deal with that everywhere in this state. I've been watching that bunch that hangs out in the Hardy creek area for a few years now and it seems like they've been holding steady in that area and there's way more people and traffic for them to deal with there. Anyhow I'm all for the LB project, bring some in and see how they do! Good luck!</p>	<p>Kirk Johnson</p>

<p>Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android [go.onelink.me]</p>	
<p>I support the big horn reintroduction into the little belts.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Twingrim@bresnan.net</p>
<p>I support the proposal to reintroduce bighorn sheep to the Little Belt Mountains in central Montana.</p> <p>Raymond Gross</p> <p>Dillon, MT</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>raygross0144@gmail.com</p>
<p>I fully support reintroduction of bighorn sheep in to the Little Belt Mountains of Montana.</p> <hr/>	<p>guy@fishingwithlarry.com</p>

<p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	
<p>I support and encourage your plans to reintroduce bighorn sheep in the Little Belt Mountains. Native wildlife is more valuable and more sustainable than cattle or introduced sheep species. I have hunted big game in Montana many times and hope to again. Thank you. Bruce Hare</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>bruce.hare@yahoo.com</p>
<p>Great idea, I feel they would do great there. thx steve</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>sdmont78@gmail.com</p>
<p>Yes!</p> <p>Let's do everything we can to protect our wild bighorn sheep herds.</p> <p>The Little Belts would provide excellent habitat and relatively small opportunity for conflict with livestock.</p> <p>Conn McKelvey Great Falls</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment</p>	<p>Cmckelvey@yahoo.com</p>

for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.	
<p>I would love to see bighorn sheep in the little belts. After introducing them give them 5 years and do draw tags</p> <p>_____</p> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	dlwilliams@wilburellis.com
<p>That would be awesome, I'm all for it.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	psylintpartnur@gmail.com
<p>Sure, go for it Especially if its former home range for the critters</p> <p>_____</p> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	mtshus@gmail.com
<p>That's an awesome idea to restock sheep in the Little Belt mountains! I thinks the Belts would provide an excellent habitat for them to thrive !!! Stock them now!</p> <p>_____</p> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	hunting.montana@icloud.com

<p>I am all for re-introducing native species back into their habitat, as long as there is a long-term management plan in place as well.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Eemooretx@hotmail.com</p>
<p>I like the idea of putting sheep in the Belt Mountains. Do it!!!</p> <p>Sent from my iPad</p>	<p>Larry Weimer</p>
<p>I support this fully</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>trial153@gmail.com</p>
<p>I would really enjoy knowing that bighorns are back in a self-sustaining herd(s) in the Little Belts. I prefer Alternative C IF a disease free donor herd can be located and logistics of capture and transfer to the Little Belts accomplished effectively. If not, disease monitoring must be repeated in a timely and thorough manner. You know about the role of persistent pneumonia carriers, etc. Can you depend on USFS and permittees to follow rules regarding use of domestic sheep/goats for weed control?? It's easy to say that livestock will be kept separate from wild sheep, but much harder to actually do. I saw no mention of potential problems with predation by lions, coyotes, wolves, etc. This should be addressed in the EA. Good Luck!</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>mitch@silverstar.com</p>

<p>I am strongly in favor of reintroducing bighorn sheep into the Little Belt Mountains. This species has high aesthetic and economic value and deserves to be reintroduced.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>fstewart@latmt.com</p>
<p>I am in full support of re-introduction of sheep in the little belt mountains. It would be great to have a large established herd here. This area offers great public access points which would make sheep hunting viable and profitable to the state and to us hunters.</p> <p>Steven Pulaski 87 Legacy Trail Bozeman MT 59715</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Overhaulmt@hotmail.com</p>
<p>Yes I agree with sheep getting reintroduced to the Little Belts.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>nolanbill66@gmail.com</p>

<p>by making it public about those sheep you have pretty much sealed their fate ,, their was also a small band of Mountain Goats in the area that were poached out, once the locals find out about the sheep I expect they will be poached out also.</p> <p>I have been watching those sheep and the Goats for years, there is no use wasting the money on a project that is doomed from the start.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>napequa@3rivers.net</p>
<p>Yes, we want bighorn sheep in the Little Belts</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>riderdoc@bellsouth.net</p>
<p>I am For Big Horns in Little Belts.</p> <p>Steve Constable</p>	<p>Steve Constable</p>
<p>I strongly support the reintroduction of BigHorn sheep into the Little Belt Mountains. The habitat is great for sheep - and dispersion of sheep into other ranges will help bolster populations.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>marcsvee@gmail.com</p>

<p>After reading the plan I feel that it is well thought out and believe that this is an opportunity to develop additional groups of wild sheep in an area once inhabited by them. I would believe the benefit would be greater to the sheep & public versus any negative impact due to being on high quality public land. I believe this project is worthy of the cost projected. Thank you and keep up the great work ! Doug Dick</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>ddick@zoominternet.net</p>
<p>Jay:</p> <p>I totally support the effort to introduce additional Big Horn Sheep in the Little Belts.</p> <p>Introducing additional sheep will increase the genetic diversity of the present small population.</p> <p>Please carry forward with this project.</p> <p>Jess Secrest PO Box 697 White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645 Phone Home 406-547-2136 Phone Cellular 406-799-4576 Email secrest@itstriangle.com</p>	<p>secrest@itstriangle.com</p>

<p>Regarding FWP's proposal to reintroduce bighorn sheep to the Little Belt Mountains in central Montana, I am in full support of this endeavor and if at any point you're looking for public assistance in the process I would be happy to be involved. My primary residence is in Billings, MT, but I am a landowner of a family cabin that we frequent between Neihart and Monarch and spend the majority of our recreating in the Little Belts- from hunting, fishing, skiing, camping, and hiking to ATV/UTV trips. Having bighorns back in the region would be amazing! Ben</p> <p>Phippsbhipps@montanabones.com</p> <p>WarningThe information contained in this electronic transmission is intended for the individual or entity named above. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient or the person authorized to receive it for delivery to the intended recipient, please take notice that any dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this transmission in error, please delete it from your system without copying it and notify the sender immediately by electronic reply, phone or fax so that our records can be corrected.</p>	<p>Ben Phipps</p>
<p>I think it's a Great idea. Long overdue. Thanks for continued good work.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>jmorris@think1.com</p>
<p>I fully support the transfer of bighorn sheep into the Little Belt Mountains. This seems like a no-brainer, so please proceed expeditiously! Any time MFW&P can expand the bighorn's range, establish new populations, and provide more recreational opportunities, there should be no delay.</p> <p>Additionally, as there are some remnants of the original herd there, this reintroduction would greatly diversify the gene pool providing for a healthier herd.</p> <p>Curt Nizzoli</p>	<p>nizzoli@wavecable.com</p>

<p>Port Orchard, WA</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	
<p>Mr. Kolbe, I fully support the proposal to reintroduce bighorn sheep to the Little Belt Mountains in central Montana. I have always wondered when this opportunity would come to fruition and certainly hope this is the time and place. Having a degree in Wildlife Biology, I see the potential for this species to do very well and expand within the Little Belts. This is an exciting opportunity that I hope is supported by the surrounding communities and by all. Furthermore I believe the proposed release site is ideal and hope other release sites will be proposed in the future. Thanks, Terry Antonich</p>	<p>terry_antonich@yahoo.com</p>
<p>Definitely would support the reintroduction of more bighorns to that area.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>muleycrazy98@gmail.com</p>
<p>Hi,</p> <p>I am writing to express my support for the reintroduction of bighorns to the Little Belt mountains. As this range used to contain bighorns, reintroducing them would be a big win for Montana is utilizing the prime habitat that exists in this range, while also restoring it to its historical status. Thank you for your work in moving this plan forward.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>josh.healy@hotmail.com</p>

<p>Yes we need to get more sheep and goats in the little belts. I see the small band of sheep on Running wolf often. Would love to see more sheep up there.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	Smeyerstep@gmail.com
<p>Fully support the plan!</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	curtwesley@gmail.com
<p>If you need some sheep for the Little Belt Mountains, get them from the Roosville Port Of Entry at the top of Hwy 93. They are becoming a traffic hazard. Just look at the photo. That's just a few rams 15 yards from the road.</p>	Gary Crandall
<p>YES!! I support reintroducing Bighorn Sheep back into the Belts to supplement and increase the pioneering herd there already.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	bigman_const@hotmail.com
<p>My family & I absolutely love this! Restoration of the ecosystem is critical to our local landscape as well as a positive step toward global health.</p> <p>Thank you for your efforts in helping these iconic creatures!</p> <p>Kindly, Jessica Kalanick Helena, MT</p>	Jessica Kalanick

<p>Please reintroduce bighorn sheep to the Little Belt Mountains. That will be great.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>slukkason@juno.com</p>
<p>I support the reintroduction of bighorn sheep to the Little Belt Mountains as described in the 2010 Montana Bighorn Sheep Conservation Strategy. The Little Belts contain habitat which is suitable for wild sheep and once held wild herds of bighorns. Attempting to restore a self-sustaining bighorn sheep population is the right thing to do for wild sheep, conservation and Montana.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>jrdoll6@gmail.com</p>
<p>I fully support the reintroduction of bighorn sheep back into the Little Belts.</p> <p>John DiPrizio Martinsdale, MT</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>adessa@mtintouch.net</p>
<p>I fully support this. Thanks for all the great work MT FWP!!!</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt</p>	<p>blake.amon@hotmail.com</p>

Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.	
<p>GREAT proposal FWP! I am in favor of reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains. I hope it becomes reality. This will be a win for Montana.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	wapitihunter21@gmail.com
<p>I support relocating a breeding population of bighorn sheep to the Little Belts. I sincerely hope FWP continues its work of putting and keeping more wild sheep on the mountain.</p> <p>Respectfully,</p> <p>Randy Davis</p> <p>_____</p> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	rtraverdavis@gmail.com
<p>I think this is a great idea. Would be a great opportunity to restore and conserve sheep habitat in Montana!</p> <p>_____</p> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	remmer6734@gmail.com

<p>I am a Montana hunter residing in Great Falls and want to voice my strong support for the transplant of bighorn sheep into the little belt mountains. Thank you.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Jamespaul69450@gmail.com</p>
<p>I fully support capture and reintroduction of Big Horn Sheep everywhere it's feasible. The need all the help they can get for getting as close to their historical range as possible.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Lowrysam@yahoo.com</p>
<p>Yes yes yes Without question is a good idea I believe the species will thrive there. Would love to be volunteer helper in such an awesome conservation effort ?</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Calliewebster81@gmail.com</p>
<p>I support the reintroduction of sheep in the little belts.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>doug.stickney@yahoo.com</p>

<p>Just wanted to submit a brief comment to voice my support of Bighorn Sheep reintroductions in the Little Belts. I think it is important and necessary to bolster the recolonizing sheep by augmenting the existing population. This will help ensure long-term viability of this population and potentially provide another refuge/source for bighorns as other populations in the state face exposure and decline.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>justin.lex@gmail.com</p>
<p>I support relocating bighorn sheep to the Little Belts. There is some great habitat there and a lot of potential.</p> <p>Jonathan Nutt Ennis, MT</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>jonathannutt@hotmail.com</p>
<p>I fully support sheep reintroduction into the Little Belt mountains to improve herd growth.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Brownbear932008@yahoo.com</p>

<p>I enthusiastically support this proposal to re-introduce Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, and hope to see continued expansion and successful growth of BHS herds throughout the state and the rest of the US. I may never successfully draw a BHS tag, but knowing they are there and having a chance of seeing them while hunting other wildlife is exciting. The proposal is very sound, and from my reading of this proposal it seems a lot of thought and research went into this. I hope this proposal is accepted.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>fuzzyvoxes@gmail.com</p>
<p>I am strongly in favor of the reintroduction of sheep to the little belts.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Dhblanton@verizon.net</p>
<p>I would very much support this effort. Having hunted that area in the past for mule deer and elk, I would love the opportunity to take my sons back in the future to see sheep in the area.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>dcopas@frontier.com</p>
<p>I would love to see this happen any places where sheep can be introduced is a big plus</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>dconnor36@gmail.com</p>

<p>I fully support the reintroduction of bighorn sheep into the Little Belts. I enjoy that country very much and it would be nice to see sheep back where they belong. Thank you for all of the hard work on this.</p> <p>Shane Germann</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>shane_germann@hotmail.com</p>
<p>I support the reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>shanethornton@ymail.com</p>
<p>I am in full support of re introducing Big Horn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains. The Little Belts are a great area for the sheep and I think they would do well there.</p> <p>Dan Smrdel P.O.Box 1555 Seeley Lake, Mt.</p> <hr/>	<p>dansmrdel@gmail.com</p>

<p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	
<p>Please reintroduce wild sheep into the Little Belt Mountains . I will totally support this!</p> <p>_____</p> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Bradshultz@hotmail.com</p>
<p>I support establishing a (larger) herd of sheep in the Little Belts.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Huntandgather@hotmail.com</p>
<p>Excellent project. Assisting bighorns expand their range into areas historically occupied by them will allow for higher genetic diversity and produce additional populations of sheep that may be used for future expansions. Additional populations are also buffers to local disease die offs. Please keep up the good work.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>foxtrot1238@gmail.com</p>

<p>I support this fully</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>trial153@gmail.com</p>
<p>Make it happen. More bighorns in their native range the better.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>nickmuckerman@hotmail.com</p>
<p>As a Montana resident and hunter, I support the reintroduction of bighorn sheep into the Little Belt mountains to increase hunting opportunities, meta-population connectivity, and ecosystem health and value. Bighorn sheep are an important part of Montana's natural heritage.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>tksmith113@gmail.com</p>
<p>Yes, yes, and yes again. Expanding the range of big horn sheep in the state is a win for everyone (except maybe sheep ranchers).</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>stephenjones045@gmail.com</p>

<p>Now is the time to reintroduce sheep back into the the little belts. With the amount of public land and habitat available for them, this should have been done long ago. The land can hold them, so there is no good reason to not do the job.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>kyle.ensley@hughes.net</p>
<p>The Little Belts are a special place with so much possibility. I've always thought them an understated mountain range. It's exciting to think of expanding Bighorns in them. I support Alternative B. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Bret Lian</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>bret.lian@gmail.com</p>
<p>I greatly support the proposed reintroduction of sheep into the Little Belts. Thanks for all the hard work you guys (and gals) do!</p> <p>-Adam</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>neffa3@gmail.com</p>
<p>like it. how about more turkeys?</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>mlaughlin@sletteni.nc.com</p>

<p>Good afternoon, Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this draft EA for the reintroduction of bighorn sheep into the Little Belt Mountains. I have spent a great deal of time in the proposed reintroduction area, on both professional and personal levels. I strongly agree with the habitat suitability for bighorn sheep, and also strongly agree with the analysis this reintroduction is feasible in terms of conflict/competition with domestic sheep production. Establishing a viable bighorn sheep herd into this area would be a tremendous victory for Montana FWP, and would in turn provide opportunity for both consumptive and non-consumptive resource use. The Judith River watershed is a tremendous asset for native wildlife, and I strongly support the reintroduction of species that was extirpated from the area. I would like to see alternative B adopted and bighorn sheep reintroduced to the Little Belt Mountains.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Jason Snyder</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>jasonsnyder71@icloud.com</p>
<p>Get it done!!</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Lejohnso76@hotmail.com</p>

<p>Would love to see a sustainable population of bighorn sheep in the little belts. Hope this happens!</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	jksimonelli@yahoo.com
<p>I support the agency's proposal to reintroduce Bighorns to the East side of the Little Belt mountains.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	randy182@msn.com
<p>I commend MTFWP for researching and presenting this opportunity to the public. Bighorn sheep are magnificent but fragile animals whose existence seems to be constantly under pressure. Any opportunity to expand bighorn herds into suitable habitat should be applauded by all conservation-minded individuals. It is certainly applauded by me. Thank you for taking the lead on this. I hope you succeed in this vitally important endeavor.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	rmyoung7@gmail.com

<p>I fully support the reintroduction of Bighorn sheep into the Little Belt Mountains. Specifically, Alternative B as proposed should go forward.</p> <p>David Noell</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>dnjnoell@gmail.com</p>
<p>The Little Belts are excellent sheep habitat and a great opportunity for Montana to expand its bighorn sheep resource. A Successful reintroduction would be a huge win for the people of Montana.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>White.derek44@gmail.com</p>
<p>I whole heartedly support supplementing sheep in the Little Belt Mountains! Great work FWP!!!</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>toddskibbe@hotmail.com</p>
<p>I am strongly in favor of the alternative the would reintroduce bighorn sheep in the Little Belt Mountains. Whatever measures are needed to accommodate other stakeholders should be taken to insure the long-term success of this new bighorn population.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>randy@onyourowna dventures.com</p>

<p>I am in favor of moving forward with a wild sheep reintroduction in the Little Belts.</p> <p>Paul Cockrell</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>cockrell123@gmail.com</p>
<p>I like the idea. Are you able to keep the domestic sheep out to prevent disease?</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>Djmoon9876@gmail.com</p>
<p>Dear Fish Wildlife & Parks Commission,</p> <p>I fully support the Bighorn Sheep reintroduction into the Little Belt Mountains.</p> <p>Thank You</p> <p>Bert Otis</p> <hr/>	<p>otisranch@wispwest.net</p>

<p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	
<p>I strongly support FWP's efforts to introduce bighorn sheep into the Little Belt Mountains. Bob Sanders</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>MIGR8R77@gmail.com</p>
<p>I love the idea.</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>stephenandamylepage@yahoo.com</p>
<p>Having grown up in the Little belt Mountains, I would love to see Bighorn Sheep reside there again. I have seen a small ram in the Monarch area the last couple of years. Years ago, we owned a piece of land near Castle Reef. I used to go sit there for hours during their rut just to watch them. Remarkable animals.</p> <p>Thanks Bruce Hoyer Monarch, Mt</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>hunters@3rivers.net</p>

<p>I have reviewed the EA for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains.</p> <p>I strongly support the reintroduction.</p> <p>Phil Matteson Cascade MT</p> <hr/> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>pkjmatteson@msn.com</p>
<p>Jay thanks for all your hard work on this issue that is an awesome idea for this reintroduction and SCI Great Falls is totally with you on this project, with funding and volunteer time. Thanks Brad Lencioni-SCI Great Falls President _____</p> <p>This e-mail was generated from the 'Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana' Public Notice Web Page.</p>	<p>tricityinc@aol.com</p>



August 3, 2020

Gary Bertellotti
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region 4 Supervisor
Great Falls, MT
gbertellotti@mt.gov

Jay Kolbe
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region 4 Wildlife Biologist
PO Box 527
White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645
jkolbe@mt.gov

RE: SCIF Comments on Draft Environmental Assessment for the Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana

Dear Mr. Bertellotti and Mr. Kolbe,

Safari Club International Foundation ("SCIF") appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' draft Environmental Assessment for the potential reintroduction of bighorn sheep into the Little Belt Mountains. We strongly support this effort to restore bighorn sheep to this formerly occupied range in Central Montana.

We further recognize disease monitoring and prevention of comingling with domestic sheep as critical to the project's long term success and therefore support the management direction as outlined.

SCIF is a nonprofit IRC § 501(c)(3) corporation whose missions include wildlife conservation, education and humanitarian services. SCIF has provided support to the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks for various research projects and been involved in other wild sheep reintroduction efforts in the past. SCIF has a number of active Chapters and members in Montana that support your work.

We also enjoy a productive partnership with the Wild Sheep Foundation and look forward to future collaboration with your agency on wild sheep restoration in the state of Montana.

First for Wildlife,

Christopher E. Comer, Ph.D.
Director of Conservation
Safari Club International Foundation



Date: June 23, 2020

To: Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission
Re: Proposal to introduce bighorn sheep to the Little Belt Mountains

Dear Chairman Colton and fellow Commissioners.

On behalf of the Montana Wild Sheep Foundation, we strongly support the Little Belt Mountains Big Horn Sheep Reintroduction Proposal and urge approval to move forward with this proposal.

At the same time both MTWSF and the Montana Woolgrowers Association are currently working with Montana FWP wildlife staff to move the Bridger sheep reintroduction/separation research proposal and scoping document forward. This unprecedented proposal was submitted by our two organizations on December 11, 2019 to the Governor, FWP Director and FW Commission, and we received a positive response from Director Williams on February 28, 2020.

In summary, we are asking FWP to develop a dedicated research initiative focused on the Bridger's with supporting satellite areas (3) where more management-oriented projects using similar approaches and technology as are being developed for the Bridger's that will feedback additional significant information from a broader variety of scenarios to develop science-based "effective" separation management practices.

All 3 of the satellite areas are within the area of concern regarding comingling with domestic sheep on private land and public land. The three satellite areas identified to date are 1) this **Little Belt Proposal**, 2) restoring bighorn sheep to the Tendoy's and 3) the Greenhorns Population, during capture and herd health assessment scheduled to take place this winter.

We have been in contact with the managers responsible for all the above areas and have assured them of our support for their efforts and financial support for all four projects. We have committed to providing resource support to the above efforts, as reflected in the Bridger proposal as well as has been mentioned as a need in the Little Belts proposal. Aside from ours and our partners significant fundraising efforts we also assume the FWP will dedicate some of the proceeds from Montana's auction tag along with a 3:1 match of PR funds to this overarching effort.

Wild sheep interests (agencies, private interests and universities) have not spent time or money developing science-based "effective" separation practices. Comingling of domestic and wild sheep has been a long-standing concern and has led to an abundance of caution in identifying



new transplant sites. Most agencies are relying on a line on the map (in Montana's case, 14.5 miles from domestic sheep as a significant red flag). In short, there is a reason Montana has not been able to fulfill Montana BHS Conservation Strategy Statewide Objectives #6, establishing 5 new herds... and #8 implementing strategies to facilitate effective separation between wild and domestic sheep.

As we all wait for practical developments and solutions from the world of pathology, the line on the map is the single most limiting factor in moving ahead with further bighorn sheep restoration efforts in Montana. We are long overdue in addressing the need to develop the science-base "on the ground" separation practices that could be implemented to expand Montana's wild sheep population.

There is a reason why FWP has been unable to fulfill their Bighorn Sheep Conservation Strategy statewide goal of starting 5 new herds in 10 years....our two constituent groups were not working together. The Strategy's statewide goal, "Implement strategies designed to facilitate the effective separation between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats" has also not been met. For good reason, they have not been developed. A line on a map, 14.5 miles has not led to effective separation, other than to create an untenable environment for FWP to move forward with additional restoration efforts. In short, the easy ones have been done. Our joint proposal is to help FWP to move forward with both statewide goals.

Not only does the Little Belt proposal start a new herd, it will help inform development of long overdue science-based separation practices that will lead to opening additional areas for introduction for many years to come. We applaud Region 4 Wildlife staff for advancing this proposal.

Sincerely,

Brian Solan
Executive Director
Montana Wild Sheep Foundation
bsolan.bs@gmail.com
406-461-7432

Kurt Alt
Conservation Director, Montana and International
Wild Sheep Foundation (& MTWSF)



www.montanawsf.org

PO Box 17731, Missoula, MT 59808

July 30, 2020

Jay Kolbe - FWP Wildlife Biologist
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region 4
PO Box 527
White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645
Ph: C: (406) 499-2356

Re: Little Belts Bighorn Sheep Transplant

Dear Jay,

The Montana Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation (MTWSF) fully supports the "*Little Belt Mountains Bighorn Sheep Reintroduction*" project. We anticipate awarding your funding request to the MTWSF and additionally strongly support your Grant in Aid application for additional funding to the Wild Sheep Foundation's Professional Resource Advisory Board.

We thank you for all your work spearheading this project, bringing in landowners, local producers and sportsmen support for this effort is commendable. We also recognize and support your proposed use of satellite collars and geofencing in helping to manage, mitigate and further develop effective on the ground separation practices.

We are pleased to support Montana FWP's efforts to establish a new bighorn sheep herd, the first in well over a decade!

Sincerely,

Brian Solan
Executive Director
Montana Wild Sheep Foundation
bsolan.bs@gmail.com
PO Box 17731
Missoula, MT 59808

Shane Clouse
President
Montana Wild Sheep Foundation
shane@shaneclouse.com
PO Box 17731
Missoula, MT 59808

Cc: Kurt Alt, Montana Conservation Director – Wild Sheep Foundation



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Helena - Lewis and Clark National
Forest

2880 Skyway Drive
Helena, MT 59602
406-449-5201
1220 38th Street North
Great Falls, MT 59405
406-791-7700

File Code: 2610
Date: July 31, 2020

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
Attn: Jay Kolbe
P.O. Box 527
White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645

Dear Jay:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed marten and bighorn sheep re-introductions to the Little Belt Mountains. The area proposed for reintroduction overlaps with the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest (Forest) and we are excited about the potential to restore and increase the presence of these native species to the Little Belts Mountains. Please find our comments below for both draft environmental assessments (EA).

Reintroduction of Marten to the Little Belt Mountains

We support the reintroduction of marten to the Little Belt Mountains. The Forest is currently finalizing our revised Land Management Plan and your proposal is aligned with components of both our existing plan and the revised plan. Specifically, our existing plan provides for huntable and trappable populations of furbearers (p. 2-5)¹. Our revised plan, once finalized, provides for “[n]ative and desired nonnative wildlife species [that] are available on NFS lands for a variety of nonhunting recreational opportunities such as viewing and photography” (p. 116)². And that “[f]urbearers are present and potentially available to trappers on NFS lands and habitat on NFS lands provides trapping opportunities that support Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks population and harvest objectives” (p. 116)². These provisions are aligned with your stated goal to restore native species and provide recreational marten harvest opportunity.

We support the temporary closure of marten trapping in the Little Belts so that marten populations can become established.

While we are unaware of any potential conflicts with marten reintroduction and our management activities (e.g. snowmobiling, vegetation management, etc.) we ask that you work closely with our wildlife staff to ensure that any potential issues are resolved quickly and to the satisfaction of both agencies.

¹ Lewis and Clark National Forest Plan at https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5409083.pdf

² 2020 Land Management Plan, Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest at https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd743204.pdf



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Potential Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep into the Little Belt Mountains, Central Montana

The Forest also supports the reintroduction of bighorn sheep to the Little Belt Mountains. As with marten, both our current Forest Plan and our proposed revised plan recognize the need to provide habitat to support bighorn populations on the Forest. Bighorn sheep are currently identified as a management indicator species in our current plan (p. 6-14)¹; with that comes the requirement to maintain viable populations (p. E-1)¹. Our proposed revised plan recognizes the role of the Little Belt Mountains as bighorn sheep habitat (p. 167)². The proposed revised plan also recognizes that effective separation of bighorn sheep and domestic sheep and goats on NFS lands is key to successful reestablishment of bighorn sheep to the Little Belt Mountains (p. 172)².

The proposed reintroduction of additional bighorn sheep to bighorn sheep already present in the Little Belt Mountains should facilitate the establishment of a viable bighorn sheep population. Upon successful translocation, the addition of a wild sheep herd would be beneficial for both Forest visitors and the area ecology, which had been known for having bighorn sheep prior to Euro-American settlement. The reintroduction of bighorn sheep would complement the Forest's and Districts' efforts to maintain/restore bighorn sheep habitat.

The draft EA states that this translocation is being considered a reintroduction rather than an augmentation. Clarification on the difference(s) between an augmentation and reintroduction as they relate to your policy and definitions would be helpful for the public and the Forest.

While rather minor, the draft EA references the "Judith Ranger District", whereas it is the "Judith-Musselshell Ranger District". The Judith Ranger District and Musselshell Ranger District have been administratively combined into one larger district. It would be helpful to make this change in the final EA to minimize confusion with the public.

It might also be helpful to clarify in the draft EA at page 22, "Chapter 4. Environmental Consequences", that the only livestock grazing that may be impacted would be cattle grazing, since there are no active or proposed domestic sheep grazing permits on the Forest in the Little Belt Mountains. We concur with FWP's assessment that there would likely be little to no competitive interaction for forage between cattle and the proposed bighorn sheep, as sheep prefer to be in steep, rocky, precipitous areas of escape terrain that cattle are not likely to forage in or around.

Our main concern is the potential for disease transmission between wild bighorn sheep and domestic sheep or goats. Your draft EA addresses this concern in that you state you will work with area domestic sheep producers to minimize comingling and to encourage collaborative efforts to maintain separation. The Forest is also committed to minimizing risk of disease transmission from domestic livestock to bighorn sheep particularly as articulated in our proposed revised plan: "The best available scientific information and the most current recommendations made through agency or interagency efforts shall be used to determine and establish the means with which to achieve effective separation between bighorn sheep and domestic sheep and goats on NFS lands" (p. 172)². We believe that together we can navigate the challenges that may arise should comingling between domestic livestock and bighorn sheep occur. We ask that you continue to work with our wildlife staff throughout the reintroduction effort and subsequent population establishment.

If you have further questions, please contact wildlife biologists David Kemp at 406-566-4014, david.kemp@usda.gov, or Allison Kolbe at 406-547-6001, allison.kolbe@usda.gov. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Avey', with a stylized flourish at the end.

WILLIAM AVEY
Forest Supervisor

cc: Ron Wiseman; Carol Hatfield; David Peters; David Kemp; Allison Kolbe; Denise Pengeroth



Post Office Box 1693
Helena, MT 59624
Phone (406) 442.1330
Fax (406) 449.8606
UPS Delivery: 7 Edwards St.



JULY 31st, 2020

Montana FWP
c/o Jay Kolbe
PO Box 527
White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645
jkolbe@mt.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

These comments are submitted on behalf of the Montana Wool Growers Association and its members. The Montana Wool Growers Association (MWGA) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) for the Department's potential bighorn sheep transplant into the Little Belt Mountains. The following constitutes the written comments of the MWGA.

MWGA's membership recognizes and applauds the extensive work and time FWP staff has dedicated to both drafting the Montana Bighorn Sheep Strategy and to finding suitable habitat for bighorn sheep in Montana.

As FWP is aware, the Montana Wool Growers was a partner in the development of the Montana Bighorn Sheep Conservation Strategy. Therefore, the MWGA and its membership have a vested interest in seeing the Strategy's overall goal of establishing five new viable and huntable bighorn sheep populations come to fruition.

However, as has been the policy of MWGA throughout the development and implementation of the strategy, MWGA's foremost position is that any support for the Strategy is conditioned on ensuring that no harm is done to the domestic sheep industry as a result of implementation of the Strategy. More specifically, it is MWGA's position as to this particular transplant that no harm be done to any sheep owner and their agriculture operation. This includes reviewing the plan to ensure that public grazing allotments are not jeopardized by the transplant and/or reintroduction of bighorn sheep.

With this stated, MWGA makes the following comments on the DEA.

- On a general level, MWGA and its membership support the concept of introduction of bighorn sheep into the Little Belt Mountain Range. As noted in the EA, this area of Montana is a logical location for placement of bighorn sheep given that the area has provided habit for bighorn sheep previously. Further, it is a logical choice because a majority of the proposed project area encompasses public lands.
- In addition, because of the extensive domestic sheep research conducted at Montana

State University in Bozeman, MWGA is interested in exploring the possibility of working with FWP to do bighorn sheep-domestic sheep interaction research through MSU, perhaps using this herd for the purpose of testing disease transmission between domestic sheep and wild sheep in an open range environment. Further, MWGA and its membership support and emphasize having MSU Animal Range and Ecology Departments involved in research and monitoring of the bighorn sheep population in the Little Belt Mountain Range should the introduction be carried out.

- On a more specific level, MWGA's membership appreciates that the draft EA recognizes that this transplant is ultimately controlled by Montana statute, namely, MCA 87-5-701 through 721, which provides that this proposed action is prohibited UNLESS the FWP Commission "determines, based upon scientific investigation and after a public hearing, that a species of wildlife poses no threat of harm to native wildlife and plants or to agricultural production and that the transplantation or introduction of a species has significant benefits."
- **As the MWGA has made clear to FWP personnel on numerous occasions, due to the unfortunate lawsuits filed by Western Watersheds and the Gallatin Wildlife Association in Idaho and here in Montana related to bighorn sheep habitat and the presence of domestic sheep operations, which has resulted in the removal of sheep from federal grazing allotments in various parts of Idaho, MWGA has to consider any transplant of bighorn sheep as a threat to agriculture production in Montana. This is because the very presence of bighorn sheep in an area proximate to domestic sheep grazing opens the possibility of having so-called environmental groups sue to have the domestic sheep removed. This is an unfortunate reality; and a reality that makes it difficult for MWGA to fully partner (and without hesitation) with FWP on implementation of the Strategy.**
- The MWGA has polled its members about this proposal. The Association is not aware of any of its members having a domestic sheep grazing allotment on public lands in either of the proposed transplant locations. This is a fact that lends itself to the Association supporting the proposed transplant.
- However, as correctly noted in the draft EA, this area of Montana has numerous domestic herds running on private lands. Therefore, the final EA must acknowledge that there is a high likelihood of comingling between the transplanted herd and domestic sheep in the future. If such is the case, the final EA must state expressly that, given the presence of a large number of domestic sheep adjacent to the proposed transplant area, FWP recognizes and assumes any risks to bighorn sheep as a result of instances of comingling. What is more, the EA should recognize that FWP traditionally and historically manages bighorn sheep herds as isolated herds, and does not manage for connectivity. To this latter point, the EA should recognize that while FWP expects some connectivity between this newly introduced bighorn herd and other herds, such connectivity is not required for the introduction to be deemed successful.
- The final EA should also specifically recognize that bighorn sheep are considered a species that is "secure and not at risk of extirpation or facing significant threats in all or most of its range" by the State of Montana. This according to the Montana Field guide found online here: <http://fieldguide.mt.gov/speciesDetail.aspx?elcode=AMALE04010>. Inclusion of this management fact in the final EA is critical.
- What is more, as noted on many occasions by MWGA representatives, to the extent

the Department enters into agreements with landowners related to bighorn sheep management techniques, MWGA would appreciate seeing written assurances from FWP both in this final EA and in every agreement entered into by FWP that should this bighorn transplant be carried out, that FWP will partner with MWGA and the landowner in defending in court or in any other forum an effort by a so-called environmental group to undermine the terms and scope of the agreements entered into.

- In addition, MWGA reminds the FWP that domestic sheep have proven to be a useful tool in combating noxious weeds on public lands. MWGA urges FWP to carefully consider and analyze whether a bighorn sheep introduction into the proposed transplant area will displace targeted grazing efforts, which such grazing benefits all species of wildlife. This is a factor that should be discussed with the U.S. Forest Service
- What is more, the DEA recognizes that there are big horn sheep already located in the transplant area. Pursuant to the Department's own capture, handling, and transplant policies, prior to conducting the capture and transplant process, the Department must take very action to ensure that sheep with pneumonia are not transplanted, thereby jeopardizing both the transplanted herd and the presently existing bighorn sheep population.
- Building on the prior comment, the Association has concerns that the draft EA does not adequately denote that stress factors caused by predators and inadequate habitat could be trigger for a future die off event and such factors will be closely monitored by FWP.
- The final EA must recognize and then discuss the reality that private deeded ground will likely serve as the winter range for the newly transplanted herd. In doing so, the final EA should recognize the high potential for comingling in the winter months and should set forth protocols for responding to the same.
- The final EA should discuss and consider whether lethal removal of a comingling bighorn sheep, namely a ram, is still an adequate and/or recommended method of preventing comingling between domestic and bighorn sheep. This analysis is particularly appropriate where, as here, the newly introduced herd will be equipped with GPS collars, which should help FWP identify possible instances of comingling with domestic sheep before they occur.
- Further, prior to completion/adoption of the EA, MWGA recommends that FWP personnel conduct a meeting with MSU Ecology and Animal and Range Department personnel to discuss some of the beneficial research that could be done as a result of this transplant. There is a good deal of basic research that could do be done by MSU personnel on bighorn sheep nutrition and genetics.
- Based on the Associations' review of the draft EA, MWGA has no preference as to which of the alternatives, "B" or "C" should be selected by the Department. MWGA does suggest that Alternative "B" appears to be the option that most takes into account FWP's statutory duty to ensure that the proposed transplant will not harm existing agricultural interests in and around the proposed project location. As noted in the DEA, this Alternative appears to be the preferred alternative for many of the landowners in the area.
- Further, given the recent trend by some members of the public and by some members

of the general press to blame domestic sheep producers whenever there is a die off of bighorn sheep in Montana, MWGA would like to see more detailed analysis included in the EA about the possibility of a die off occurring in this area for reasons other than bighorn sheep-domestic sheep interaction. Along this line, based on attending an earlier meeting with FWP personnel regarding the possibility of reintroducing bighorn sheep into the Little Belts, MWGA is aware that there are many environmental factors that may ultimately make this transplant unsuccessful, such as competition among various species of wildlife for forage. MWGA would appreciate that FWP recognize this possibility in its final EA.

- The MWGA appreciates that the DEA recognizes the important role private property owners will play in the success of transplanted sheep into the areas under consideration. See, DEA at p. 11. Even so, as noted in the DEA, private land ownership and rights will be impacted by this transplant should it occur and there will likely be a need for FWP personnel to access private lands to manage bighorn sheep. For this reason, MWGA asserts that the Final EA should recognize explicitly that private landowner permission for access across private property should be obtained prior to reintroduction of bighorn sheep.
- This portion of the Draft EA is consistent with Montana's Bighorn Sheep Conservation Strategy, which requires a certain stated percentage of landowner approval prior to any reintroduction. This is an issue of importance to the MWGA because a knowing reintroduction of sheep into areas where bighorn sheep will habitat private property constitutes an interference with private land ownership and invasion of constitutionally protected property rights. In this vein, MWGA recommends that the Final EA include language noting specifically that it, the Department alone, is assuming the risk of any transplant failure or any die offs and that landowners are not liable for or responsible for lethal removal of bighorn sheep on private property.
- MWGA's membership appreciates the recognition of and bullet-point discussion in Appendix A the impact bighorn sheep reintroduction could, and likely will, have on domestic sheep operations in and around the areas proposed for transplant, MWGA has made clear to the Department many times that a majority of the scientific information on bighorn sheep – domestic sheep disease transmission is done in a laboratory, and not in the wild. To the extent FWP manages bighorn sheep to prevent interaction between the two sheep species, MWGA's membership will work with FWP's staff to ensure the success of those policies. However, as stated in previous comments submitted by the MWGA in response to proposed big horn sheep transplants/reintroductions, MWGA's membership requests that the Department recognize that many of Montana's bighorn sheep die offs have occurred in populations not located anywhere near domestic sheep operations. Further, MWGA's membership also requests that the Department recognize in the Final EA that it is the Department's policy to kill individual bighorn sheep when there may be an interaction with domestic sheep and that domestic sheep operations are not at fault for such interactions merely because they produce domestic sheep.
- MWGA also incorporates comments made by its members that, in order for either of the proposed transplant alternatives to work, FWP must work with, listen to, and establish good relations with existing agriculture operations. Good landowner

relations are the key to wildlife management in Montana.

MWGA is pleased to be a partner in the management of bighorn sheep and we look forward to working with FWP staff to ensure the health and viability of this important wildlife species. Like all Montanans, MWGA's membership hopes that Montana's bighorn sheep population will prosper under this Strategy; and the Association will work cooperatively with the Department to ensure the successful transplant of sheep into the Little Belts if the Department chooses to move forward with Alternative "B" or "C." Finally, MWGA's membership is particularly interested in this project because of the opportunities it presents to partner with Montana State University and the excellent research facilities and research staff located there. With proper protections for livestock producers being put into place prior to reintroduction, this project could be a win-win for all interested parties.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J.E. Brown", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

James E. Brown
Director of Public Affairs
Montana Wool Growers Association

cc: MWGA Board

0002 – Bighorns